

CONFERENCE

BETWEEN

VERITAS AND INVESTIGATOR,

UPON THE

SUBJECTS

AND

MODE

OF

BAPTISM.

BY PHILALETHES.

S. Whitehead

Isaiah lii. 15. *So shall he sprinkle many nations.*

Matt. xxviii. 19. *Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*

Acts ii. 39. *For the promise is unto you, and to your Children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.*

L O N D O N :

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE publisher of the following conversation, between Truth and An enquirer after truth, makes no apology for communicating it to the World. He is pleased with having it in his power to favor them with such interesting remarks, upon subjects, on which the Christian World is much divided; and he would be more happy, should the perusal of them produce the same effects upon the minds of any, as Investigator experienced at the time the conversation took place.

It is well to be established in the truth, in order to be able to defend it.—The zeal of Young converts, frequently leads them to embrace, and submit to those things, which when their Judgments are more matured in divine knowledge, they see the error of, and are sorry for; and which some have had wisdom and humility sufficient to renounce; and embrace others which are more agreeable to the word, and will of God: this should be the conduct of all.

It is well also, for persons professing Religion (especially such who are but just set out for God); not only to read, but also to Mark, Learn—and Digest the word of God, and not to embrace any sentiment, be it what it may, till they are thoroughly satisfied it has that for its foundation.

No person ought to be censured for making use of lawful means to make Converts to his profession; but it cannot be right to endeavor to enforce obedience to any mode, or doctrine. Let the judgment of the person be well informed, and the authority upon which that mode or doctrine is founded, appear clear, and satisfactory to him; and he will voluntarily submit to that which appears to be his duty.

The privileges of God's Church are to be held sacred, and to preserve and defend them, is the duty of every person who is concerned for the honor of God, and the happiness of his people. These are the motives which the publisher humbly hopes induced him to send this to the press. And though the matter has been frequently, and ably controverted, yet he hopes that the brevity, simplicity, and cheapness of the piece, will recommend it to every

LOVER OF TRUTH.

CONFERENCE.

INVITED by the serenity of a Summer's Morning, I went forth to taste the fragrance of the air. The cheerful Birds were warbling their songs of praise. The painted flowers emitted their charming odours; and all Nature seemed to summon MAN, to the adoration of his great Creator.

While indulging in sentiments of a devotional turn, naturally suggested to a serious mind, by such a scene; two persons (then unknown to me, but whose names I afterwards learned) accosted each other, and engaged in a friendly and interesting conversation, which (unperceived by them) I had the pleasure of hearing, and which in substance was as follows.

Veritas. Good morning to you Investigator.

Investigator. The same to you neighbour Veritas, it is a delightful morning.

V. Quite so, and I am glad you prefer its salutary delights, to the irrational, and unhealthy indulgence of mid-day slumber.

I. Were the thoughts of many impressed as mine are, with the painful remembrance of former unimproved days and years, together with the solemnities of an eternal state, they would willingly forsake their beds to salute each morning as blessed, which preserves them from that awful place, where rest is an eternal stranger.

V. Your remark is both wise and virtuous; I presume it is the result of some late serious impressions you have received, concerning your eternal state.

I. Late indeed! had I died six months ago, I should now have been miserable beyond description.

V. Better late than never. If mercy has shone in your late conversion, I wish it may also discover the total pardon of sin, to the future uninterrupted peace of your mind.

I. I thank you for your concern for my soul's peace and happiness, and as my mind is at present embarrassed with a particular difficulty, from the conversation of a friend I late discoursed with, you will allow me to state it for your friendly advice.

V. May I be so free as to enquire who, and what he is?

I. It is a Christian friend of mine, who calls himself a *Baptist*: he has lately sought my acquaintance, to which I was not averse, but he has at different interviews repeatedly urged me to be baptized.

V. And pray what reply have you made?

I. I answered, that I was baptized in my *Infancy*.

V. Very right. And what then?

I. He informs me that *Infants* have no right to the ordinance of Baptism; that their admission to it is founded upon mere human tradition, and no where commanded in God's word: On the other hand that *Believers* are the *only* proper subjects thereof, and that *plunging*, or *dipping* is the *only* scriptural way of administering this ordinance.

V. So saying, and so proving would be well. But what did he advance in support of these assertions?

I. Much; part of which appeared so plausible, that it has *distressed* me greatly, but not altogether *convinced* me. Yet being young in knowledge, and liable to err, I was willing to suspend my judgment, until I had an opportunity of advising with persons of greater wisdom and experience, and I am not a little pleased that I have met with you.

V. If I can be the means of fixing your Judgment in this matter, and thereby afford your mind relief, I shall be equally pleased with our present interview, and you may unreservedly command my abilities, and depend upon faithful advice.

I. I gladly accept your kind offer, and desire to be open to conviction.

V. The person you have met with, I perceive is, as you observe, one of that body of people called *Baptists*; many of whom, are serious, useful, and respectable; and with whom I wish to live upon the strictest terms of amity, but on some subjects I cannot but differ from them; especially as to the Christian sacrament of Baptism; concerning which (in my opinion), they have gone out of the right way. I recommend it to you to hear their conversation upon this subject with watchfulness and care, as they are generally
such

such *young converts* as you, that they attempt to persuade to submit to their sentiments.

I. I thank you for your caution, and will endeavour to observe it.

V. I apprehend that you know there are two Christian sacraments, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord. A sacrament is an outward, and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. Thus is Baptism, an ordinance of divine institution, a rite of initiating members into God's visible Church, and is commanded to be administered to the end of the world; for being a token of the evangelical Covenant, it ought as properly to be continued during the subsistence of that Covenant, as Circumcision when adopted by Moses, and interwoven into his dispensation, was continued till that ritual was superseded by the Gospel, which declared that Jesus nailed the ceremonies of that law to his Cross.

I. Well, Sir, but I wish to be informed who are the proper *Subjects* of Baptism.

V. That information I shall proceed to give you. The Subjects to whom this ordinance is to be administered are, *First*, ADULT PERSONS, upon a profession of faith in Christ, who have not been baptized in a state of *Infancy*: and *Secondly*, THE CHILDREN of such believing parents.

I. I remember my friend admitted the *first*, but denied the *second*.

V. What God hath joined together, let no Man put asunder.

I. True, Sir, but please to proceed in your explanation.

V. Those to whom the Apostles preached, were in general such who denied that Jesus was the true Messiah, and others were Heathens, and Infidels. Therefore our Lord gave the Disciples a commission to *teach, disciple, or proselyte* such to the Christian faith, upon their embracing of which, they were to be received into the Christian Church, by having the initiating sign or seal of Baptism administered unto them. Matt. xxviii. 19. "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." If an Heathen, or Infidel, the commission is, first *teach*, then *baptize*; but if a Christian, first *Baptize*, then *teach*. This was the practice of the Jewish Church, when proselytes were admitted. If *Adult*, they were first *taught*, then *circumcised*; but their Children were also circumcised with them, and afterwards taught. Thus it is under the Gospel dispensation. The *Infant seed* of such who believe, and have had the seal of Baptism applied to them, have an equal right to the same seal which their parents have been favored with. And that this privilege may not be contracted, or confined,

finer, God has declared that upon a confession of faith in *one* of the parents, their offspring receive a foederal right to the seal of the Covenant. 1 Cor. vii. 14. "For the unbelieving Husband is sanctified by the Wife, and the unbelieving Wife is sanctified by the Husband, else were your children unclean, but now are they Holy." And Rom. xi. 16. "For if the *first fruit* be holy, the *lump* is also holy; and if the *Root* be holy, so are the *Branches*."

I. What is this Covenant which you speak of?

V. You will find it particularly explained in Gen. xvii. 1. to the 8th verse, in ver. 7. it runs thus. "And I will establish my Covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations for an *everlasting Covenant*; to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee."

I. Is this a covenant of *Works* or of *Grace*?

V. Not of *works* but of *Grace*; for God never was, nor ever can be a God to any Man since the fall in the sense of this phrase, but through Christ, and in a covenant of *Grace*. And as a proof of this matter, we are expressly told, that circumcision, the appointed sign or seal of this Covenant, was a seal of the *righteousness of faith*, see Rom. iv. 9. to the 14. Nothing can be more opposite than the righteousness of *faith*, and *works*. The Apostle mentions this as the express tenor of the Covenant of *Grace*. Heb. viii. 10. "For this is the Covenant that I will make with the House of Israel after those days saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts, and I will be a God to them, and they shall be my people." Again Rev. xxi. 7. "He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be my Son." Again Gal. iii. 16. 29. "And to Abraham and his seed were the promises made, he saith not unto seeds as of many, but as of one, and to thy seed which is Christ. And this I say that the Covenant which was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law which was four Hundred and thirty Years after cannot disannul that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the law it is no more of promise, but God gave it to Abraham by promise," &c. From the very nature of the Covenant, it plainly appears to be a Covenant of *Grace*, and it is declared to be *immutable*, and *Everlasting*.

I. But I wish to hear a little more of the seal of this Covenant, and what interest *Children* have therein.

V. You perceive that God has taken children into Covenant with himself, together with their parents, and promised to be their God. As such, he commands the seal of Circumcision to be administered,

ministered, as the appointed means of admission, which we find fully expressed Gen. xvii. 10. 14. God there declares, that he will have that Soul cut off from his people, upon whom the seal is not found. The Lord having thus taken Children into Covenant, calls them *his Children*, and claims them as his special property. Deu. xxix. 10. 15. where he is renewing the Covenant with them and says, "Ye stand this day all of you before the Lord *your God* ; " your Captains of your tribes, your Elders, and your Officers, " with all the Men of Israel, your *little ones*, your Wives, and thy " Stranger that is in thy Camp, from the Hewer of thy wood, to " the drawer of thy Water : that thou shouldst enter into Cove- " nant with the Lord thy God, and into his Oath, which the Lord " thy God maketh with thee this day, that he may establish thee " to-day for a people unto himself, and that he may be unto thee " a God, *as he hath said unto thee*, and as he hath sworn unto thy " Fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob," &c. And when the Jews had so far departed from the purity of divine worship, as to bow down to Idols and sacrifice their Children to them, God denounces a woe against them for this conduct, see Ezl. xvi. 20. "Thou hast taken thy Sons and thy Daughters whom thou " hast *borne unto me*, and *these* thou hast sacrificed unto them to " be devoured, is this of thy whoredoms a small matter." And in the following verse God (alluding to the Covenant made with them) says, "Thou hast slain *my Children*, and delivered them to " pass through the fire for them." Thus then it appears, that God having taken Children into Covenant with himself, together with their parents, claims a peculiar property in them, and calls them *his Children*.

I. Has God no where commanded them to be excluded from this Covenant?

V. No. There is not the least trace of such an act in the word of God, he has no where deprived Children of this blessing.

I. By what authority then, do any persons refuse Infants that privilege, which God had granted them, and never deprived them of.

V. By no authority but their own, in direct violation of scripture, and the constant usage of the Church. The Apostle in Heb. x. 1. says, "That the Law was a shadow of good things to " come ;" and Baptism is that good thing which has taken place of Circumcision, as being a more mild and extensive seal, as well as more consonant with the Gospel dispensation. If Baptism is not that good thing which succeeds Circumcision, I do not know

what is ; and if no good thing has taken place of circumcision, then the Church of God is deprived of a great privilege, and the Apostles words are *not* true ; for if Children are not capable of being admitted into God's visible Church *now*, as well as *under the Law*, then the privileges under the law were greater than those under the Gospel, which I hope none will be daring enough to assert. That truly eminent Divine, Dr. Owen, speaks much to the purpose, when he says, " That a privilege once granted by God to any, cannot be changed, disannulled, or abrogated, without, First, An especial divine revocation of it ; and secondly, The substitution of a greater mercy, and privilege in the room of it."

I. But my Baptist friend objected to the baptizing of Infants because there is no positive and express command for it.

V. Were we to refuse administering this ordinance in the room of circumcision, because there is no positive and express command for it, by the same rule we must omit to do many things we now practice, for instance, There is no command for admitting *Women* to partake of the Lord's Supper, as none but *Men* were present at its first institution. Nor is there any command for keeping the *first* day of the week, instead of the *seventh*, as the Christian Sabbath, and yet, this change has taken place, and the first day is observed as the Christian Sabbath almost universally in every Christian Country, even by our *Baptist* friends, who have no better authority for the practice of *one* than the other, and who with equal propriety might object against the things before mentioned as against Baptism being administered in the room of Circumcision ; but as they do not against *all* founded upon the same authority, why against *one* in particular ? Since it is plain and evident that baptism succeeds circumcision, as a seal of the same Covenant, so it ought to be administered to the same subjects *professing believers, and their Infant seed*.

I. Since you say that Baptism succeeds Circumcision, and ought to be administered to the same subjects, pray Sir, inform me whether they both express the same things ?

V. They do. For, *First*, " They are both convictive signs of our natural corruption, propagated by the way of natural generation, hence this corruption is called the uncircumcision of the Heart. Jere. ix. 26. And the removal of it, the circumcision of the Heart. Deu. xxx. 6.

" *Secondly*, They both signify the putting off this body of sin in virtue of Christ's death. Col. ii. 11.

" *Thirdly*,

“ *Thirdly*, They are initiating signs of the Covenant, or tokens of admission into the Church, and Covenant of God. Gen. xvii. 9. 10. 11.

“ *Fourthly*, They are discriminating marks betwixt God’s covenanted people and the Pagan and unbelieving World.”

I. But as my Baptist friend objects to the Baptism of *Infants* because there is no express command for it, have they this foundation for their practice, the baptizing of *Adult believers*?

V. No. There is not any positive command in scripture to baptize *believers*, much less *believers only*.

I. Is it not said in Mark xvi. 16. “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved?”

V. It is; but there is no command in that passage to *baptize believers*. It is a declaration of our blessed Lord’s to his disciples, containing the substance of what they were to preach, *faith in him*, as essential to Salvation, for in the close of the verse it is added “He that believeth *not* shall be damned.” There *baptism* is not mentioned, *only faith*. Therefore whether baptized in a state of *Infancy*, when *adult*, or *not at all*, if *believers in Christ*, we shall be saved, but not otherwise. And though Baptism as being a Christian ordinance ought to be administered to the proper subjects thereof, *Believers in Christ* and their *Seed*, yet it is in no respect essential to Salvation, but it ought not by any means to be administered to any *Adult person*, who has been baptized in a *state of Infancy*, for we do not read in all the Acts of the Apostles, though containing the history of about *Thirty Years*, of any one person being baptized when *Adult*, who was born of *believing parents*. The commission left by our blessed Lord with his disciples was universally extensive. They were to baptize *all Nations*, and certainly children make a part, and a very considerable one too of every Nation.

I. True, Sir, but do not the words run *first Teach*, then Baptize?

V. There is no strict dependance to be paid on the *order of words*, were we uniformly to do this, we should believe things to be very different from what we now do. For instance, It is said Mark i. 4. “John *baptized and preached* in the wilderness.” I suppose no person believes that he baptized *first*, and preached afterwards, but the reverse; he *first preached* repentance, and then baptized such who brought forth fruit meet for it. But if we take the words in the order in which they lay, we must believe that he first baptized, and then preached. Again 1 Cor. vi. 11. “Such

“ were some of you, but ye are *washed*, but ye are *sanctified*, but ye are *justified*,” &c. I apprehend most Christians believe that they are *first justified*, and afterwards *Sanctified* and made meet for eternal Glory. — So that there is no dependance to be placed upon the order of words. It is plain from the Gospel, that *knowledge*, *repentance*, and *faith*, are necessary to Salvation, but will any infer from hence, that because *little Children* are not capable of these, therefore they cannot be saved. This would be a cruel inference, and without any foundation in the word of God. They are capable of *Salvation* though not of *Faith* and *Repentance*, and if they may be saved, without a capacity of *knowing Christ*, of *Repenting* and *Believing*, why may they not be *baptized* without these things? 2 Thess. iii. 10. The Apostle commands that if any would *not work*, neither should they *eat*. But surely it is not to be inferred from thence, that because Infants cannot *work*, therefore they must *be starved*. Baptism is the sign of *Regeneration*, and if our Baptist friends believe little Children to be capable of the *blessing*, as doubtless they do, why then do they deny them the *outward sign*? such conduct appears to me indefensible upon rational principles. Abraham the father at Ninety and nine years old was first circumcised, and all the Men of his House with him. At the institution of Baptism, Parents and Masters of families being professing Christians were first baptized. After the Circumcision of Abraham, and the Men of his House, their families were also *circumcised*. Thus in the Gospel, we read of *whole families* being *baptized*, and the promise runs to their seed under the *Gospel*, as it did to them under the *Law*: see Acts ii. 39. speaking of Baptism, the Apostle says, “ For the promise is unto you, and to *your Children*, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.”

I. But does not this imply that the promise was to their Children when called by divine Grace?

V. No. The Apostle has clearly no such meaning, for as one says, he might have said this of the Children of *Heathens* and *Infidels*, as well as of the seed of *Christians*. That if when they were grown up, they became Christians, they should enjoy the privilege of the Christian Covenant. But the Apostle joins the *Children with their Parents* in consequence of their relation to them, and infers their right of admission into Covenant with God, and as proper subjects of Baptism, as the seal of that Covenant. The Apostle does not say, the promise is *now* to you and *shall be* to your *Children when grown up*; but the promise *is* to you *and* to your Children,

Children, by which he plainly expresses the *present* privileges of their Children, above those of unconverted Gentiles. As though he had said, The promise which encourages you to enter into this new Covenant by Baptism, is primarily to you, and your Children, as the descendants of Abraham : and secondarily, to as many of the Gentiles who are yet afar off, including their Children also, as by the ministry of the word the Lord our God shall call. The promise being made *equally* to *them*, and *their Children*, it naturally follows, that *they and their Children* ought to be baptized. If we suppose their Children excluded from Baptism, we make the Apostles argument confused, and inconclusive ; for then it would stand thus, " The promise is *to you*, therefore be ye baptized in the name " of the Lord Jesus. The promise is *equally* to *your Children*, yet " let *not them* be baptized, for they are not proper subjects of Baptism." But this appears a gross absurdity, that their Children should be included in the promise, and yet might not be admitted to receive the external tokens of it. This promise you will find fully explained by the Apostle in Acts iii. 25. " Ye are the Children of the Prophets, and of the Covenant which God made " with our Fathers, saying unto Abraham, and in thy seed shall " all the kindreds of the Earth be blessed." Again, see Rom. xv. 8. " Now I say that Jesus Christ was a Minister of the circumcision for the truth of God to confirm the promises made " unto the Fathers." Thus you see that our blessed Lord came not to *destroy* the Covenant made with our Father Abraham, but was the minister of it, and came to *confirm* it ; and no Covenant made with Man was ever confirmed of God in Christ but the Covenant of *Grace*, for of that, Jesus was the only Mediator, and therefore the Covenant made with Abraham, which I have just mentioned, must be of *Grace*.

I. But, Sir, If Children are capable of being admitted to the ordinance of Baptism, does it not follow, that they are proper subjects to be admitted to partake of the other Christian Sacrament the Lord's supper ?

V. By no means, there is a considerable difference in the two Sacraments, for in *Baptism*, a person is *passive* ; in the Lord's supper he is to be *active*. The former is a seal of *regeneration*, of which Infants are capable, and therefore the seal may be applied ; but the other is a seal of *nutrition*, of which Infants are *not* capable, and therefore it is *not* to be applied unto them. So that from the different nature of the two Sacraments it may be concluded, that one belongs to Infants, the other does not. We read in

Scripture of whole Households being baptized, and we have reason to conclude from the general signification of the term therein applied, there were Children included in them. We have an account of the Jailor's in Acts xvi. 31. 41. where it is said, that "He was baptized believing in God, with all his House."

I. Don't you think that the phrase implies that his House believed?

V. No, it does not mean any such thing, for the word here used, is in the *singular* number, and the passage should be rendered thus, "He rejoiced over all his House *he having* believed in God."

We read also of the Household of Lydia being baptized in the same Chapter, Verses 13.—15. and that upon a profession of *her* faith *only*, for we read of no part of her Household believing. This was the case with Stephanus and his Household.

I. But why do you think that there were Children in any, or all of these Households?

V. From the general signification of the term as used in scripture. See Heb. xi. 7. "By faith Noah being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear prepared an ark to the saving of his *House*," &c. Both Children and parents are here included. Again Gen. xlv. 18. "And take your Father, and your *Households* and come unto me, and I will give you the good of the Land of Egypt, and ye shall eat of the fat of the Land." Now in the 19th Verse we have the persons particularly mentioned who composed these *Households*, "Now thou art commanded this do ye: take you Waggons out of the Land of Egypt for your *little ones*, and for your Wives, and bring your Father and come." And in Gen. xlvi. 5. we find that he did as he was commanded, "And Jacob rose up from Beersheba, and the Sons of Israel carried Jacob their Father and their *little ones*, and their wives, in the Waggons which Pharaoh had sent to carry them." 1 Tim. iii. 4. 5. we have the term again explained, "One that ruleth well his own *House* having his *Children* in subjection with all gravity." Thus then it appears plain and evident, that by the term *Household* in Scripture, *children* are included as making a part thereof; and we find that Children are frequently included, where they are not fully expressed. For instance, Exod. xii. 30. speaking of the destruction of the first born in Egypt, it is said, "For there was not an House where there was not one dead," That is one *Child*. Again, Joshua viii. 25. 26. "And so it was that all that fell that day both of *Men and Women* were
" twelve

" twelve thousand, even all the *Men* of Ai, for Joshua drew not his hand back wherewith he stretched out the spear, until he had utterly destroyed *all the Inhabitants of Ai.*" I suppose none will doubt that there were *Children* in this great and populous City. I could produce other similar instances, but these are sufficient to prove the truth of my position, and leave but little doubt in the mind of any unprejudiced person but there were *Children* in *some*, or *all* the Households said to be baptized by the Apostles.

I. Pray, Sir, does the baptism of Infants appear to have been the practice of the Apostles and primitive Church?

V. Undoubtedly, if any credit is to be given to the testimony of the most learned, and eminent Men who lived in the first Ages of the Christian Church, whose veracity is not doubted even by our *Baptist friends*; in any other historical matter they assert, nor do I think it would be called in question respecting that of *Infant baptism*, were it not opposite to their favorite Sentiment; for alas! in this imperfect state, the best of Men are not without some failing or other.

I. I much wish to hear some particulars.

V. This I will proceed to give you, and in doing which I shall confine myself as much as possible to their own words. The first I shall mention, is that of

Ireneus, who was well acquainted with Polycarp, John's disciple, and therefore must know the practice of the Church in that day. The ancient Fathers used frequently to express *Baptism* by the term *Regeneration*, it being the outward sign thereof, and this term he uses to express it by. "When Christ (says he) gave his disciples the commission of regenerating to God, he said, Go teach all Nations, baptizing them, &c. Matt. xxviii. 19. He came (meaning Christ) to save all persons by himself who are regenerated unto God (that is baptized), both *Infants*, little *ones*, *Children*, young Men, and the Aged." Another eminent person is

Justin Martyr, who flourished only forty Years after the Apostles, and who confirms his testimony, and speaks of some who from *Children* were disciplined to Christ; and no doubt he here refers to the commission before-mentioned, for we know of no other form of initiating into the visible Church but that of *baptizing*. The next authority I shall produce is that of

Origin, who lived about the year 230, and who in his comment upon the Epistle to the Romans, speaking of Original Sin, says, "On account of this the Church has received a tradition from
" the

"the *Apostles* to apply baptism to *little Children*." ORIGIN was born about 85 years after the apostolic Age, and though he resided chiefly at Alexandria in Egypt, yet, he was well acquainted with the practice of all the Churches of any note, in every part of the World.

Tertullian was cotemporary with *Origen*, and corroborates his testimony by similar assertions. But another striking evidence we have from

Cyprian, who flourished only 248 years after the birth of Christ, and says, that a question was started in his day, whether Infants might be baptized before the eighth day (because that was the day on which circumcision had used to be administered, and therefore an evident proof that they considered Baptism as succeeding Circumcision). A Council of sixty-six Ministers was summoned to determine the matter, at which *Cyprian* presided, who all agreed, that it ought *not* to be delayed until the eighth day, at least, there was no necessity for it. And this matter is further confirmed in a passage from the second canon of the Council of Carthage, which consisted of 214 Bishops, to whom the same question was stated, and to which they gave the same Answer, "That there was no occasion to defer Baptism until that time." *Cyprian* was an eminent Martyr, and overseer of the churches at Carthage. The next evidence I produce is that of

St. Ambrose, who lived about 274 years from the Apostles, and who expressly declares, "That the baptism of Infants was the practice of the Apostles themselves, and of the Church until that time." I shall not tire you with enumerating evidences of this fact, but close with the testimony of that great Man of God, and light of the Christian Church,

St. Austin, who wrote against *Pelagius* about Original Sin, in the year 410. *Pelagius* endeavors to prove that Infants are born free from Original Sin, which *St. Austin* denies, and insists upon the necessity of baptizing them. His words are these, "Why are *Infants* baptized for the remission of sin if they have none?" This argument puzzled *Pelagius*, as he did not deny Infant baptism, for he acknowledges it was what the Church always held, and when some charged him with denying it, he says, "We confess that Infants ought to be baptized for the remission of sins, according to the rule of the universal Church, and according to the doctrine of the Apostles," &c. And in another place he says, "Men slander me as if I denied baptism to Infants. I never heard of any, not the worst of Heretics, that could say such a thing of Infants."

I. Well, Sir, since you have given me such evidence that the Baptism of Infants was the practice of the Church to the year 410, pray when was this practice first opposed?

V. That great historian *Wall* took much pains to find out whether Infant baptism ever ceased to be the practice of the Church, and he tells us, that from the year 410 to the year 1150, a space of 740 years, no Man in all that period ever pretended to deny it. One of the first persons that opposed it, was *Menno*, born in Friesland in the year 1505, when his followers were called *Menmonites*. The particulars respecting the rise and progress of this Sect, you will find at large in Mosheim's and Brown's Ecclesiastical Histories of the sixteenth Century.

I. Then the opposition began only about 270 years since?

V. No longer; until that time the privileges which Children enjoyed of being initiated into God's visible Church by baptism was held sacred: and no doubt when the happy period arrives that the Glory of the Lord shall cover the Earth as the Water doth the Sea, then, all error shall be banished from thence, and our *Baptist friends* will embrace such in *their* Arms which our divine Master embraced in *his*, and open their Church to those, to whom Jesus unfolds the Gates of Heaven.

I. Permit me to ask you one question more, and then I have done upon this part of the subject: Are Children capable of being *disciples of Christ*, Members of the Covenant of Grace, Subjects of Regeneration, and Heirs of eternal Glory?

V. Most undoubtedly they are, and of course capable of receiving the outward and visible sign of Baptism.

I. I thank you for the pains you have taken to set me right in this matter. I hope my mind will continue in the same peaceable frame I now find it to be, respecting the *SUBJECTS of Baptism*, and were it not intruding upon your patience, I should beg leave to hear your opinion respecting the *MODE*, by which this ordinance ought to be administered, agreeably to God's word. My Baptist friend says, that *plunging* or *dipping* is the *ONLY* scriptural mode of Baptizing.

V. Your Baptist friend seems to have been very far from the truth respecting the *Subjects* of Baptism, and I trust we shall find him equally distant concerning the *Mode*, for by his asserting that *Dipping* or *Plunging* is the *only* scriptural way of baptizing, he lays himself under the necessity not only of proving that plunging is the right Mode, but that Baptism has ever been performed by that Mode, and that there is *no other*; that *sprinkling* or *pouring* is not Baptism.

It

It appears to have been our blessed Lord's will that Water should be used in Baptism, as Bread and Wine in his last Supper; but we don't find that he has fixed the quantity to be used in the administration of either. He never encouraged an intemperate zeal for modes and forms, but on the contrary condemns it, and rebuked his disciples for it, so that even supposing *dipping* or *plunging* had been the Mode instituted (which I by no means admit), yet, as a mere mode we are not to be confined to it, any more than to the particular posture of receiving the Lord's Supper. For says he upon another occasion, "The Sabbath was made for Man, and not Man for the Sabbath." We read of diverse washings, or Baptisms, Heb. ix. 10. And all who are acquainted with the Original, know that the words mean *diverse sorts* of Baptisms. The only place where the word is used again in the new Testament is in Rom. xii. 6. where we are to understand *differing kinds of Gifts*, as the words following plainly shew. Therefore by the phrase *diverse Washings*, or *Baptisms*, we are to understand different modes of applying Water for purification under the Jewish Law, and no doubt has a particular reference to the Jewish *Sprinklings*.

I. Pray, Sir, what does the *original word* for Baptizing signify?

V. Bapto is the original word, from which Baptizo is a derivative, and consequently a diminutive, as derivations ending in zo frequently are. Bapto means to *wash*, Baptizo to *wash a little*.

I. Is the Original word Bapto never used but to express Dipping?

V. Yes, it is used in one place where there is not the least shadow of dipping. It is said in Daniel v. 21. speaking of Nebuchadnezzar, "He was *wet*, *washed*, or *baptized* (as the word means), with the dew of Heaven." I shall leave you to judge how a person is baptized with *rain* or *dew* descending upon him, whether he is *sprinkled* or *plunged*. It is said of the Israelites 1 Cor. x. 2. "They were all *baptized* unto Moses in the Cloud and in the Sea," or (as the word means) "*at* or *by* the Sea." Here the word *Baptizo* is used *not* for *dipping* but for some other mode of Washing. Let us attend to what an infallible Writer says upon this subject Exodus xiv. 22. "And the Children of Israel went into the *midst* of the Sea upon the dry Ground, and the Waters were *a Wall* unto them on the right hand and on the left." I shall here again leave you to determine whether persons can be plunged into water, and at the same time be on dry Ground, as the Israelites were.

I. How do you conceive they were baptized?

V. By

V. By the *sprinkling* of the sprays of water produced by the strong East wind, by which the Lord divided the sea, and kept it as walls on each side of them. The word *Baptizo* is again used in Mark vii. 4. 5. where likewise there is not the least appearance of *dipping*, "And when they come from Market (speaking of the Jews), except they wash, or baptize (as the word signifies), they eat not," and many other things they have received to hold, as the washing or baptizing of *Cups, Pots, Brazen Vessels, and Tables, or BEDS* (as the word also means). You cannot believe that the Jews plunged their whole Bodies into water before every meal, or dipped their Pots, Brazen Vessels, Tables, or Beds, &c. at all. The Jewish washings for purification are very well known. Lev. viii. 11. "Moses *sprinkled* of the anointing oil upon the altar seven times," &c. Lev. xiv. 7. "And he (meaning the Priest) shall *sprinkle* upon him that is to be cleansed seven times." Numbers xix. 18. "A clean person shall take Hyssop and dip in Water and *sprinkle* it upon an unclean person," &c. The Molten Sea was made for the Priests to wash in, 2 Chron. iv. 6. and how this was done is explained Exodus xxx. 19. "For Aaron and his Sons shall wash their *hands and feet* thereat," &c. and thus no doubt the Pharisees washed themselves before their meals, in the time of Christ. Hence they came to him saying, "Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the Elders, for they wash not their *hands* when they eat." And the manner in which this was done we find explained 2 Kings iii. 11. "Here is Elisha the son of Shaphat which *poured* Water on the hands of Elijah."

I. Admitting that the original word does signify *Pouring* or *sprinkling* as you say, yet did not John baptize by *Dipping* or *plunging*?

V. I believe not. We do not find that John is any where called the *Dipper*, nor the ordinance *Dipping*, or that he ever baptized in that way, his words are, Matt. iii. 11. "I indeed baptize you *with* Water, unto repentance; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear, he shall baptize you *with* the Holy Ghost, and *with* fire." Now if in the *first* clause we are to read *Dip* or *Plunge*, we should read the same in the *latter*, and then see what we shall make of it, "I dip you *in* water, but he shall dip you *in* the Holy Ghost, and *in* fire." But I ask, were the disciples *dipped* in the Holy Ghost, or was not the Holy Ghost poured out upon them? And were they *dipped* in fire, or did not fire (in appearance) descend upon their heads? Now substitute *sprinkle* instead of *Dip*, and it will

run

run quite smooth, and agreeable to truth. "I sprinkle you with
" Water, but he shall sprinkle you *with* the Holy Ghost, and
" *with* Fire."

I. But, is it not said that John was baptizing *in Jordan*, and does not that imply *plunging*?

V. Not in the least, even allowing that he did baptize *in the River*. But there is no reason to believe that he did baptize standing in the River, nor does the word in the Original mean any such thing, for the same word is more than an Hundred times in the New Testament rendered *at*, and an Hundred and fifty times *with*, and in 1 John v. 6. it is rendered *by*, so that it might with equal propriety have been rendered " John baptized *by*, *at*, or *with* the " Water of Jordan."

I. Is it not said in another place, That " John was baptizing in " *Enon* because there was much water there." I remember my Baptist friend laid great stress upon the term *much water* in that passage.

V. I apprehend your friend did not tell you whether Enon was a City, Place, or River, but gathered *plunging* from *much water* being there. He should have told you that the Phrase means *many waters*, this, those of his sentiments who are acquainted with the Original will allow. Now a place where there were many small Streams or Rivulets, was absolutely necessary for John to fix upon, on the account of the numbers that flocked to him, for we read that " *All* Judea and the Inhabitants of *all* the region round about " Jordan came to John to be baptized." This being the case, and many of them coming from far, it was convenient and needful to fix upon a place where they might have Water for their Cattle, as well as their own use, and this they could not have in the Wilderness, therefore prudence dictated to John the necessity of such a Situation. But there is no reason to infer from hence that John *plunged any*, much less *all* that were baptized of him there. You can't suppose that *all* who came to *John*; or *one* of the three thousand that were baptized by Peter and other Apostles, had provided a *change of Apparel* for such an event, for I apprehend none of the *latter* knew when they left their habitations of the happy circumstance that took place by Peter's preaching, and therefore could not have made provision for it. And it certainly would have been very unsafe to have suffered them to go home in their *wet cloaths*: and as no doubt they were of both Sexes, modesty forbids they should be baptized *naked*. From these and other cogent reasons that might be advanced, there is much greater
cause

cause to believe that both John and the Apostles baptized by *pouring* or *Sprinkling*, which might be performed without any of the inconveniences before-mentioned which would have attended *dipping*.

I. It may be so, Sir, but what do you think of the Baptism of Christ? Is it not said that he went up straitway out of the water, which certainly implies that he was in it?

V. True, if you can prove that he came *out of* the water, I will readily admit that he was *in it*. But even supposing that you could do that, it does not prove that he was *plunged* in it. But the Apostle does not say in the *Original*, that he came out of, for the same Greek word here rendered *out of*, is in many places rendered *from*; and might in this place. I shall cite a few passages where the word is used. Matt. iii. 7. "O generation of Vipers who hath warned you to flee *from* the wrath to come." Again, Chap. xi. 25. "At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee O Father Lord of Heaven and Earth, because thou hast hid these things *from* the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto Babes," &c. Again, Matt. xxviii. 2. "And behold there was a great Earthquake, for the Angel of the Lord descended from Heaven, and came and rolled back the Stone *from* the Door and sat upon it." Now unless we believe that the stone was *in* the Door (which none surely can do), we have no reason to believe that Christ was *in* the Water. The passage might as properly be rendered thus, "And Jesus when he was baptized came straitway *from* the Water." And as most Rivers run in Vallies, it is common to say of a person that ascends from them, "He came up straitway *from* the Water."

I. Once more, Sir, Was not the Eunuch plunged by Philip? It is said they both went *into* and came *out of* the Water.

V. There is no cause to believe that they were either of them plunged, supposing it could be proved that they went *into*, and came *out of* the Water, though the passage does not say any such thing, for the original words are allowed by Baptists, as well as others, to admit of different constructions, and among others *to* and *from*. We shall mention a few places where the same words are used. Matt. xv. 24. "I am not sent but *unto* the lost Sheep of the House of Israel." Again, Acts xxviii. 14. "And so we went *toward* Rome." Again, Matt. xvii. 27. "Lest we should offend them go thou *to* the Sea and cast an hook and take up the Fish." We don't suppose that Peter went *into* the sea to cast his hook, but *unto* or *to* the sea and stood by the side of it.

Again,

Again, 1 Cor. x. 2. "They were baptized *unto* Moses," &c. This last Phrase has a peculiar reference to Baptism. The words here translated *out of*, signify *from*. See John ix. 1. "A blind Man *from* his birth." Rev. iii. 10. "I will keep thee *from* the hour of temptation." As the Original will admit of different constructions, agreeable to the analogy of faith and among many, *to* and *from*, there is no just foundation to infer *Dipping* or *Plunging* from this Phrase.

I. Once more, and I have done. Is it not said, Rom. vi. 4. and Col. ii. 11. 12. "That we are buried with Christ by baptism into death, &c." Is not this a proof of *Plunging*?

V. They who from these Passages suppose, that Baptism is a sign of the Burial and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, quite mistake the Apostle; for if you observe his words, he does not speak of the Burial and Resurrection of Christ simply considered, but he speaks of *our being* buried, and having risen *with him*: by which he evidently means, our being dead unto Sin, and alive unto God, by virtue of the Saviour's Death and Resurrection; having the old Man crucified, and the body of Sin destroyed, that we should not live any longer therein; but that as Christ was raised from the Dead by the Glory of the Father, so we also should walk in newness of life. Now since it is not *Christ's* burial and resurrection, that is signified by baptism, but our communion with him, and enjoying the benefit of his death and resurrection, in the death of sin and a life of righteousness and true holiness; the argument from hence in favour of plunging, which our Baptist friends make so great a boast of, appears to be founded upon a mistake. They run away with the Idea, that baptism ought to be performed by *Immerison*, because it is a sign of our Lord's burial and resurrection; whereas if they would pay proper attention to the passage, they would soon be convinced that the Apostle is speaking not of this, but of the death of Sin, and the life of Grace in believers, and therefore their mighty argument for *plunging* falls to the ground. Besides, if baptism be a memorial of the Saviour's *burial* and *resurrection*, as the Lord's supper is of his death, one would think we should first partake of the Lord's supper before our baptism, because the *death* of Christ certainly *preceded* his *burial* and *resurrection*. And is it not very strange, that the one should be frequently celebrated, the other only *once* in our lifetime? Ask your Baptist friend what is the cause of this difference, and why Christians should not be buried in water *once a Month* in commemoration of the Saviour's *burial* and *resurrection*, as they generally eat and

and drink at the Lord's Table *once a Month* to commemorate his Death. But if they will insist upon it, that *Plunging* may be here fairly inferred by arguing from the *Thing* signified to the *Sign*, have we not an equal right to pursue the same conduct? Certainly we have; and upon this plan, I am persuaded the decision would be in our favour. Let us see what Baptism is emblematical of—
First, Baptism is emblematical of *Justification by the blood of Christ*, and therefore we have good ground to conclude, that it ought to be administered by *Sprinkling*. We never read of believers being *dipped* in the blood of Christ, though we do of their being *sprinkled* with it. Heb. ix. 13. 14. "For if the blood of Bulls and of Goats, and the Ashes of an Heifer *sprinkling* the unclean sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God." Again, Heb. xii. 24. "And to Jesus the Mediator of the new Covenant, and to the blood of *Sprinkling* that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel." Again, 1 Peter i. 2. "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and *sprinkling* of the blood of Jesus Christ." These passages of Scripture have a peculiar allusion to *sprinklings* under the Law which were used for cleansing persons and things from certain pollutions; and were typical of the blood of Christ, which by the eternal Spirit is *sprinkled* upon the Hearts and Consciences of all those who are Justified in the sight of God. In the baptisms of the Old Testament we no where read of *one person being commanded to dip another*. When one person was the *Agent*, and another the *Patient*, it was *always* done by sprinkling or *Pouring*.

Again, *Secondly*, Baptism is also an emblem of *Regeneration* and *Sanctification*. This appears from the scripture expression of "Being baptized into the death of Christ." "Being buried with him by baptism into death, and being therein risen with him by the operation of the Spirit of God." As also from John iii. 5. "Except a Man be born of Water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God." And Titus iii. 5. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the Washing of *Regeneration* and renewing of the Holy Ghost," which doubtless refers to the baptismal washings as the *sign*. *Sprinkling* was enjoined by God under the Law, as the appointed means of purification, see Lev. xiv. 7. also Ezl. xxxvi. 25. "I will *sprinkle* clean water upon
 " you

" you and you shall be clean from all your filthiness, and from all
 " your Idols will I cleanse you." Again, Isaiah lii. 15. " So
 " shall he (meaning Christ) *sprinkle* many Nations." This pro-
 mise had its accomplishment when our Lord delivered the com-
 mission to his disciples to *baptize* all Nations. Matt. xxviii. 19.
 The water therein pointing to his precious blood which had been
 lately shed, agreeable to what the Apostle says, Heb. x. 22. " Let
 " us draw near with a true Heart in full assurance of faith, having
 " our hearts *sprinkled* from an evil conscience, and our bodies
 " washed with pure water." Again, Isaiah xlv. 3. " For I will
 " *pour* water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry
 " ground, I will *pour* my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing
 " upon thine *offspring*." Agreeable to the ancient promise made
 with Abraham, Gen. xvii. 7. " To be a God to thee and to thy
 " seed after thee in an *everlasting Covenant*." We are told in Acts
 x. 45. " That on the Gentiles was *poured* out the gift of the
 " Holy Ghost." The descent of the Holy Ghost upon the
 Apostles is another proof of *pouring* or *sprinkling* being the proper
 mode of baptizing. Matt. iii. 11. " I indeed baptize you *with*
 " water unto repentance, but he that cometh after me," &c.
 " shall baptize you *with* the Holy Ghost, and *with* fire." This
 was fulfilled in Acts ii. 3. " There appeared unto them cloven
 " Tongues like as fire, and it *sat upon* each of them, and they
 " were all filled with the Holy Ghost." If those persons were
 baptized upon whose heads *only* the fire rested, those certainly are
 baptized upon whose heads water is *sprinkled* or *poured*; the quan-
 tity of water is no more essential to the right performance of this
 ordinance, than the quantity of bread and wine is to that of the
 Lord's supper; one drop of water is of the same essence, and
 equally efficacious in this ordinance, as the Ocean. If we refer
 to the conversation that passed between our Lord and Peter, rela-
 tive to the washing of his feet, we shall find the latter remark
 verified. Christ desires to wash Peter's feet *only*, but he wishes to
 have his head and hands washed also, but what does our Lord say?
 " He that is washed needeth not save *only* to wash his feet, but is
 " clean every whit," &c. John xiii. 4. 10. which evidently im-
 plies that it is neither the quantity of water, nor the part to which
 it is applied, that is in any respect material, for it is the *Thing*
 thereby signified that cleanses, even the *blood of Christ*. Thus by
 considering the things which baptism is significant of, it plainly
 appears that the sign administered by *Sprinkling* or *Pouring* is most
 expressive thereof.

Having

Having thus briefly and Scripturally combatted your arguments, and answered your objections, I leave you to determine who are the proper subjects of Baptism, and which is the most Scriptural Mode of administering it; and if from what I have advanced your mind is delivered from the difficulties it before laboured under, I shall think myself well repaid for the pains I have taken to accomplish it, and you will have cause to consider this an happy interview.

I. Honored Sir, the pains you have taken demand my gratitude, and the blessing I have received infuses joy into my breast, and I hope from the information this interview has afforded me, to be useful to my fellow Christians, who may be under similar circumstances. I am pleased with reflecting, that I can now dedicate my Infant offspring to a covenant God, in the ordinance of baptism; and that agreeable to his own institution. I find my heart grateful to him for the bestowment of so great a privilege, and consider myself bound by the tenderest ties of Paternal affection, to bring my dear Children up in the fear and admonition of the Lord; and shall be careful, through his Grace, to be found in the practice of those means, which are calculated through a divine blessing to bring them to the experimental knowledge of those things, which this ordinance is but the sign or seal of.

V. Having been instrumental in freeing you from the distress you labored under, when we met this morning, let me recommend you to give the Glory to God where alone it is due, for without his blessing, Paul may plant and Apollos water in vain. And though you now think differently from your Baptist friend respecting the ordinance of Baptism, yet do not disesteem him, nor consider him as an enemy, but on the contrary, as a Brother in Christ. For though you differ in one non-essential doctrine, yet you agree in the grand *foundation*—truth, that “Salvation *“belongeth to the Lord.”* Live and love as Children of the same Father, Members of the same Body, Partakers of the same Grace, and Heirs of the same Glory. Avoid needless controversy, and shew by your conduct that you are willing to assist in promoting the cause of your common Lord. Be bold for the truth as it is in Jesus, and let who will contend for Modes and forms do you earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the Saints; and whatever you may want as to the things of *time*, be careful to secure the blessings of *Eternity*; that when your service is finished below, it may be said unto you, “Enter thou into the *“Joy of thy Lord.”*”

But

But, if after all your wishes and attempts to avoid controversy with your Baptist friends, they should still persist to use their endeavors to persuade you to submit to their Mode of Baptism, I would recommend you to ask them a few plain and simple Questions in a Christian Spirit, such as the following ; and perhaps if after well considering the matter, they find themselves incapable of affording you such demonstrative proof as you require, they will then either cease to controvert the subject any more with you, or confess themselves mistaken in the sentiments they had imbibed ; and whether you preserve peace, or gain your Brother, you do well.

QUESTION *First*. If God grants a special privilege to any, can a power short of that by which it was granted, make it null or void ?

Q. *Second*. God having taken Children into Covenant with himself, together with their Parents ; and appointed them a seal of that Covenant, where has he ordered the Covenant or Seal to be abrogated, and the subjects of it to be excluded ?

Q. *Third*. If *Baptism* is not the Seal of the same Covenant under the *Gospel*, which *Circumcision* was under the *Law*, what is ?

Q. *Fourth*. Since you affirm that *Dipping* is the *only* scriptural Mode of baptizing, where is the command to be found for administering it in that manner ?

Q. *Fifth*. As you assert that the Apostles baptized by *Dipping* or *Plunging*, where is there an instance to be found in the Bible of their baptizing by that Mode ?

F I N I S.